



**HAND THERAPY CERTIFICATION COMMISSION**

**Marketing**  
**Request for Information**  
**April 22, 2024**





## **HAND THERAPY CERTIFICATION COMMISSION**

### **MARKETING: *Request for Information***

#### **Statement of Intent**

The Hand Therapy Certification Commission (HTCC) is seeking a relationship with a marketing entity to formalize and implement a marketing strategy and structure, and to operationalize processes for HTCC to market the CHT credential to its stakeholders. The desired outcome is to grow HTCC over the coming years and to protect the CHT credential from potential competition.

#### **Management and Organization**

The Hand Therapy Certification Commission, Inc., (HTCC) (website [HTCC.org](http://HTCC.org)) incorporated in 1989, is a not-for-profit agency that provides a voluntary credentialing program to certify occupational therapists (OTs) and physical therapists (PTs) in the advanced clinical specialty of rehabilitation of the upper limb. HTCC's mission is to support a high level of competence in hand therapy practice and to advance this specialty through a formal credentialing process.

HTCC's main business is providing a test to OTs and PTs to become a Certified Hand Therapist (CHT) after they meet eligibility requirements including years of practice in the field. CHTs are required to recertify every 5 years mostly through required continuing education. HTCC derives its revenue through the certification and recertification programs.

HTCC has experienced great success during its 35 years due to many factors, two of which are a sincere desire for excellence in the craft and a lack of competition. The passion of practicing CHTs is a powerful force for the driving desire to grow the specialty to improve the lives and careers of practitioners as well as create better outcomes and quality of life for patients.

HTCC is governed by a voluntary board of directors comprised primarily of CHTs. It is managed by two staff members. Testing, legal, accounting, etc. services are outsourced to various vendors.



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#### Market Dynamics

The CHT credential is highly valued by those in the rather small arena of hand and upper limb injuries and surgeries but is not well-known by others. There are over 7,500 CHTs worldwide with the vast majority practicing in the United States. While the growth of new CHTs is keeping pace with the retirement of many of the initial CHTs, it is anticipated that HTCC cannot continue to depend solely on the factors which led to its past success.

Currently, the CHT credential does not have direct competitors. However, because it is voluntary there is nothing to preclude a lesser process or group to undermine the CHT. HTCC seeks a comprehensive approach to increased awareness of the value of the credential and create demand for those who wish to hold and retain the CHT credential.

HTCC's current areas of communication are by use of its website, email, and direct mail. Limited advertising and publication of information about the CHT credential are accomplished through professional association journals and related media.

#### Current State of HTCC Marketing to Stakeholders

1. Potential CHT candidates: Currently, HTCC primarily grows through word of mouth, specialty referrals, and through the interaction of up-and-coming therapists with CHTs during internship or clinical rotations. HTCC maintains an email list of prospects and CHTs, but the management of the email list is primarily manual and time consuming. There is little automated communication and there is very little list-building capacity on the website. Current communications consist mostly of notifying candidates of upcoming test dates and encouraging them to register.
2. Unsuccessful CHT candidates: Approximately 60% of candidates pass the examination. While many unsuccessful candidates re-take the examination, HTCC does not have a formal plan to target this population but sees potential for targeted communications to encourage re-testing for the CHT.
3. Recertifying CHTs: CHTs highly value the credential. This is demonstrated by 75% of CHTs recertifying through three 5-year recertification cycles (15 years) after initial certification. HTCC does not formally market to this population but reminds them of their recertification cycle via direct mail, email, and notices posted through the website.
4. Other Stakeholders: referral sources, patients, public, payors, employers, etc.: While HTCC does not formally market to these populations, there have been periodic communications directed to physicians requesting feedback on the value of the CHT to their patients.



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### HTCC Marketing Goals and Focus

**Strategic Vision: 10,000 CHTs by 2030**

2024 Goals:

1. Increase the number of CHTs by 10%.
2. Increase the number of physical therapists CHTs by 3%.

Primary Focus for 2024:

- Increase access to PTs and OTs to influence them to take and pass the CHT exam.

HTCC's priority for marketing in 2024 is to reach more therapists to influence them to sit for the exam.

#### *Potential Strategies*

- Focus on target markets (i.e., metropolitan areas where there is a high number of people sitting for the exam).
- HTCC being seen more as nurturing and sharing HOW to be successful rather than the agency who just puts together the exam.
- Appeal to current CHTs and the legacy they want to continue. (The people getting ready to retire have a level of passion that is perhaps greater than other groups.)

Other Areas of Focus:

- Increase access to patients with hand and upper limb conditions to seek out a CHT.
- Soliciting compelling information CHTs can share with referral sources for direct marketing.
- Increase access to surgeons, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, family doctors, and sports medicine doctors to influence them to send patients to a CHT.



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#### Scope of Work

HTCC is seeking a relationship with a marketing firm/professional to formalize a marketing strategy and structure, and to operationalize processes for HTCC to market the CHT credential to its stakeholders. The desired outcome is to grow HTCC over the coming years and to protect the CHT credential from potential competition.

HTCC seeks a partner who will create a comprehensive marketing strategy for HTCC. The initial focus will be to implement a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) program targeting potential CHTs and recertifying CHTs. HTCC envisions an evolving, long-term relationship with a marketing entity that will likely include various opportunities for consultation, development/creation of campaigns and materials, outreach, market analysis and reporting, etc.

**Please note: All work products will be solely owned by HTCC, no retention of copyrights, work products, design graphics, etc. will be owned by the marketing firm.**

- Immediate / Short term needs
  - Development of a comprehensive marketing strategy.
  - Assessment and packaging of HTCC's current resources and develop a consistent brand.
  - Implement Customer Relationship Management (CRM) program.
  - Assist with content creation, including website content, blog posts, articles, and promotional materials.
  - Digital marketing, social media marketing, and email campaign development and execution strategies.
- Additional ongoing needs
  - Market research and competitor analysis.
  - Public relations and media outreach.
  - Performance tracking and reporting.



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**Qualifications and Experience**

HTCC is soliciting firms with expertise in marketing for professional associations in the healthcare arena. Priority will be given to those who demonstrate an understanding of the nuances and unique focus of credentialing organizations.

Please indicate your interest by addressing the following required items in your response to this *Request for Information*.

- Please provide information about your marketing firm's relevant experience and track record, including examples of successful campaigns for **similar credentials or certification programs**.
- Identify key team members and their expertise, including qualifications and relevant industry experience.
- Provide names of similar clients and/or client testimonials that demonstrate your firm's capabilities.
- Provide the range of services your firm currently offers.
- Provide a description of how you would approach creation of an overall marketing strategy versus handling ongoing marketing needs for HTCC.
- Recommend how best to break down HTCC's scope of work for bidding / budgeting purposes.

**RFI Response**

1. Please respond to the required items listed in the *Qualifications and Experience* section in writing.
2. Submit by email to Martin Walsh, HTCC Executive Director. (mwalsh@htcc.org).
3. All responses are due by 6:00 pm Eastern Daylight Time, Friday, May 3, 2024.
4. HTCC will conduct individual 30-minute Zoom sessions on Friday, May 17 and Saturday, May 18. The purpose of these sessions will be for introductions, clarifications of scope of work, and to determine whether there is a mutual desire to proceed with a formal *Request for Proposal*.
5. Your responses and Zoom session discussions will be held in confidence by HTCC and not shared with other respondents.



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6. HTCC will invite selected firms to respond formally to a *Request for Proposal* after the Zoom sessions.
7. Responses to the *Request for Proposal* tentatively will be due June 15, 2024.

**Questions and Clarifications:**

- HTCC intends to use the ZOOM sessions on May 17-18 to answer questions and clarify any aspect of our marketing needs.
- Please do not hesitate to email Martin Walsh, HTCC Executive Director ([mwalsh@htcc.org](mailto:mwalsh@htcc.org)) in the interim if you need more information to aid in your response to this RFI.
- Potential areas for discussion during the ZOOM sessions:
  - A description of your firm's proposed approach to promote the CHT credential and encourage individuals to take the examination.
  - Insights you have gleaned from our descriptions of HTCC's current market dynamics, marketing goals and proposed strategies. How will these insights inform your marketing strategy?
  - A tentative breakdown of proposed marketing channels, tactics, and messaging, along with rationale for your selection, levels of marketing professionals recommended and timeframes for implementation.
  - How you would measure the effectiveness of the marketing efforts and adjust strategies accordingly.
  - Your firm's availability and proposed timeline for creating and executing the marketing strategy, including key milestones and deliverables.
  - How you price and determine budget allocation across various marketing activities.
  - What Customer Relationship Management (CRM) programs you use.